

feudal realm was seriously threatened by burgher democracy. Men feared that if Artevelde were allowed to develop his newfangled schemes, 'all noblesse would perish.' The immediate pretext for war between France and Flanders was that the Flemings had burnt villages on the French King's side of the frontier. Philip does not seem to have been as able and fortunate in his relations with foreign Powers as in his internal policy. He did not do his best to postpone the war with France, and did not make all the efforts that he might to gain the immediate alliance of England.

This country was the natural ally of the new republic. The dictator's father, Jacob van Artevelde, had been the friend of Edward the Third. The son had now unexpectedly given England a last chance of gaining a footing on the Continent. A new State with strong anti-French proclivities had suddenly sprung into existence. Since we did not intend to make peace with France at once, it was our true policy to protect Flanders, as Elizabeth under very similar circumstances protected rebellious Holland. The danger of French invasion must always have kept Artevelde so subservient to our wishes that we could have dictated terms of economic and political alliance, and become 'the most favoured nation' in trade and war; the English and Flemish shipping together could have held the Channel against all comers. Alliance was plainly for the interest of both parties.

It was known that Philip would be attacked by the whole power of France before the year was out. A few hundred trained English soldiers, hastily equipped and sent over, would make a great difference in the coming struggle, for though Artevelde had at his command great resources and great numbers, neither he nor his subjects had military capacity or experience. The Flemish ambassadors had an interview at Westminster with the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl of Salisbury, and the Earl of Buckingham, at which they asked for alliance and for English troops; but coupled the request with a demand for two hundred thousand crowns, an outstanding debt owed by England to Jacob van Artevelde, dating back to the time of Crecy. The revival of this claim was very ill-timed, and showed that Philip's great natural